

Maine State Library

**Digital Maine**

---

Agricultural and Seafood Marketing and Cook  
Books

Economic and Community Development

---

5-1953

## **The Maine Lobster is a Promotional Asset**

Maine Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries

Maine Development Commission

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalmaine.com/food\\_marketing](https://digitalmaine.com/food_marketing)

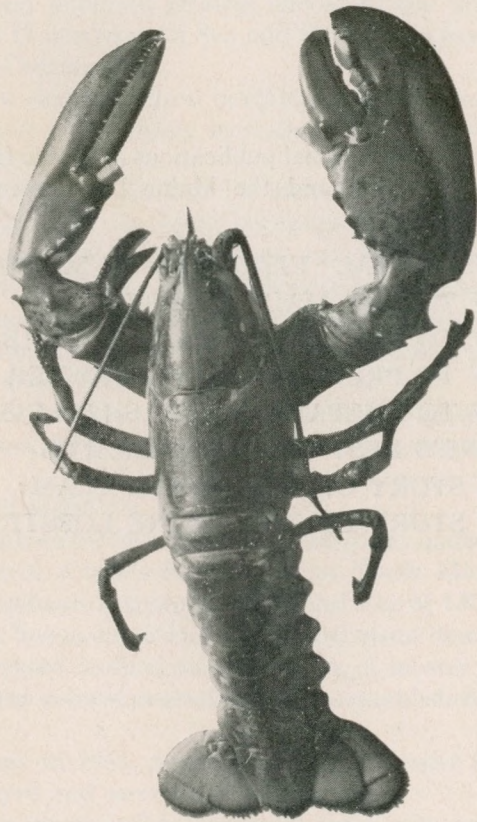
---

*Libby Len-  
Xindex*

# The Maine Lobster

is a

# Promotional Asset



Published by  
Maine Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries  
and the  
Maine Development Commission  
Augusta, Maine  
May 1953

List of additional promotional publications available from the Maine Development Commission and the Maine Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries:

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES OF MAINE  
HOW TO EAT MAINE LOBSTER  
HOW TO PREPARE A MAINE CLAMBAKE  
HOW TO PREPARE MAINE LOBSTER  
HOW TO PREPARE MAINE SHELLFISH  
MAINE'S BEST SEAFOOD RECIPES  
THE STORY OF THE MAINE CLAM  
THE STORY OF THE MAINE LOBSTER



## THE MAINE LOBSTER IS A PROMOTIONAL ASSET

In the past twelve months the Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries has received many requests from lobster wholesalers and retailers for a summary of promotional ideas and merchandising programs which have been used to sell Maine lobsters throughout the country. On the basis of these requests the Commissioner, with the cooperation of the Maine Development Commission, has published this booklet outlining the more prominent and successful of these promotional programs. Included in this publication in outline form are the various promotional and publicity services offered to the Maine seafood industry by the Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries and the Maine Development Commission.

Results show that restaurant operators who have made effective use of Maine lobster have greatly increased the consumption of fish and other shellfish.

During and after World War II, the scarcity of meat increased the popularity of seafood. In many instances Maine lobster replaced the steak as the top dish in restaurants and because of the uniformly high quality of the Maine lobster these new consumers continued to buy the product year after year. Alert restaurateurs found that well advertised moderately-priced Maine lobster dinners were outstanding in promoting other seafoods.

The most remarkable of these promotional programs has been put on by Dan Clark, owner of Clark's Restaurants, South Bend, Indiana.

Clark's story is this —

"With an aggressive merchandising campaign sparked each year by a special festival, Clark's Restaurant on North Michigan Street in South Bend, Indiana, has made this inland city of 130,000 people lobster conscious, has made lobster a standard menu item throughout the year, has increased seafood sales exclusive of lobster over 300%, has boosted business volume generally, and has established food costs more effectively.

"In one week in 1951, during our annual lobster festival, the restaurant prepared and served 2,640 lobsters.

"The lobster merchandising program dates back just five years.

"After World War II, we wanted to avoid what we thought would be a business decline. The only sure way to avoid such a situation, we believed, would be through a promotion of some sort.

"We analyzed our business, its capacities, its facilities, its potentials and its location, then laid out a set of rules, or rather a yardstick, with which we then studied our needs.

"Briefly, these points were:

1. A need for a promotional program.
2. The program of promotion had to be sustained—permanent—not just a shot in the arm.
3. The program, to be successful, would have to appeal to a wide variety of people and should be built around a food item that would have an unlimited appeal to people or could be made so.
4. The item, price-wise, could not be out of bounds to the pocketbook of the average American.
5. The item should be capable of glamorization to the extreme.
6. The item should not be seasonal, but should extend well around the calendar year.
7. The high cost of meat, both present and future, must be a definite factor influencing our thinking away from a meat item.
8. Most important of all, whatever item is finally selected, the restaurant must be able to turn out a masterful job at the peak of perfection.

"With these conditions thoroughly explored and the promotion item, Maine lobster, selected, it was then necessary to proceed with a carefully-worked out promotion program, complete in every detail, to glamorize the item to the fullest.

"Factors taken into account were:

1. Time of year best suited for the promotion and the actual length of the promotional period of intense activity.
2. Selection of a good caption—one that would mean something—to describe this event. (The dictionary defines a festival as a periodical season of entertainment and feasting).
3. A long range program would permit use of such expressions as 'first annual,' 'second annual,' etc.
4. Method and type of preparation must be decided upon.
5. Method of advertising and promotion to be used, all thoroughly co-ordinated, in approaching potential customers.
  - a. Direct mail to a selected mailing list of country club calibre—a real personal invitation.
  - b. Cleanly written, yet hard-hitting, ads announcing coming great event.
  - c. Radio spots properly placed and timed.
  - d. An exterior sign, such as a huge banner across the upper front of the restaurant announcing the coming great event.
  - e. Use of table tentcards doing the same thing.
  - f. Necessity for establishing a special festival price that would



help insure success of the event, and also to lure novices to try something new at a price that wouldn't hurt them, yet would not hurt food cost too much.

- g. A special meeting of instruction, along with written instructions to service staff, and a separate one for the preparation staff, on what would be expected of them. Most important—to establish uniformity of service.
- h. Use of cloth lobster bibs. This seems most glamorous part of promotion, yet is extremely practical.
- i. Red plastic lobster pins to be worn by all personnel—service, preparation and back-of-house. Get everybody in act.
- j. Utilization of an instruction sheet on 'How to Eat a Maine Lobster.' Offer of personal assistance when customer seems to be in trouble.
- k. Have managers wear lobster neckties.
- l. Sell lobster jewelry at cashier's desk.
- m. Liberal use of material available from suppliers for window displays, such as lobster traps, colored floats, fish floats, fish nets, scallop shells for ash trays, etc.

"Additional promotional tie-ins followed later:

1. Setting up an oyster bar in the dining room with a tall top-hatted young man opening up Bluestones and Cherrystones before customers' eyes. Use of a spotlight from the ceiling to heighten the effect.
2. Installation and use of a lobster tank to impress customer with the fact you serve live lobsters. We call them 'purified.'
3. Use of a sharp instrument to permit customer to scratch his own initials on the shell of the lobster to prove to him he gets the lobster which he selected.
4. Securing of an extra large lobster for display purposes. Get a newspaper story and picture on this.
5. Capitalize on this period to bring fine desserts to the attention of your customers by holding a sales contest for your table salesgirls. Major aim to boost check averages.

"Benefits and consequences of the festival promotion have been numerous, as mentioned earlier. Among them:

1. Seafood purchases have been increased approximately 300% exclusive of lobster.
2. General business volume has definitely increased. Customers have formed new eating habits.
3. Food cost has been stabilized by selling seafoods instead of meat items.



"An example of how the lobster festival has caught on in South Bend is provided by lobster sales figures for the festival week. They have been: 1948—1,100 lobsters; 1949—1,700 lobsters; 1950—1,950; 1951—2,640; and 1952—3,080.

"After festival promotion activities include:

1. Restoration of lobster prices back to normal.
2. Occasional use of small newspaper ads to remind public constantly that you are still serving their favorite seafood.
3. Announcement of consumption figures in one of ads for week of lobster festival. Use menu clip-ons for this, too.

"Plans for the next festival are begun immediately following the event, profiting by mistakes of the last one and planning new ideas to make the next one even greater.

"Growth of the festival promotion and festival business to its present size has been gradual, with new ideas added each year. Special seafood menu covers and seafood place mats and the oyster bar were added the second year. The lobster tank was introduced and emphasis placed on airline delivery shipments the third year. Emphasis was placed the fourth year on maintenance of the special festival price for four years despite the steadily increased costs of raw food and general restaurant operation.

"The first festival was held October 12-25, 1949. It was felt that South Bend people, like most of those in the midwest, weren't used to eating lobster, for they could only order it in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland or the east when they might feel like 'spreading themselves.' It was felt, though, that offered at a special price and merchandised aggressively, that lobster would go over as a menu item. It was necessary to have a large enough volume so we could shave our margin or profit and still come out ahead at the special price. Arrangements were made for the lobsters, special display equipment was set up, and plans made for an intensive newspaper, radio and direct mail campaign.

"The festival was a big success. Hundreds came to eat who had never eaten in our restaurant before. Many learned to eat and to like lobster and came back to eat it again later.

"Letters inviting those who received them to come in and enjoy a lobster were mailed to 1,000 members of the city's most prominent clubs. (This number was increased in succeeding years to 3,260 members of clubs, and an up-to-date file of these names is maintained for just such mailing purposes).

"The letters pointed out that Clark's would offer genuine Maine lobsters 'boiled to a luscious red color with a taste that can be truly called a king's delicacy' the remainder of the winter season—that



special arrangements had been made with an east coast lobster shipper to keep us supplied with live, 1-pound lobsters regularly—and that to inaugurate the season, a genuine Maine lobster weighing one pound, boiled to a delightful red color, served with melted butter touched with lemon, french fries, a favorite salad, rolls and coffee would be offered for one week only at \$1.50. The letters also pointed out that the restaurant would serve all types of seafood, such as jumbo shrimp, deep sea scallops, Beaver Island whitefish, Blue Points on the half shell and other foods.

“Newspaper ads in a local newspaper with 100,000 circulation, lobby cards emphasizing an air of romance, together with freshness and quality, and table tentcards were other promotional features used with effective results. Following the festival, other table tentcards were used to stress that lobster would still be available at a low price despite the end of the special event.

“Descriptive menu insert sheets with tabs emphasized a direct tie-up with a lobster supply at Rockland, Maine.

“Take-home descriptive folders were obtained to give to all customers to assist the uninitiated in eating a lobster, to create interest in the lobster as a food specialty and to keep guests occupied during the 20 minutes required for preparation of their order.

“Special lobsters which were obtained for use of guests have probably been the most talked about service feature in the history of our restaurant operations.

“Special tablecloths, posters from Maine on the restaurant walls and special photos in our windows were other tie-in features.

“A specially constructed tank containing artificial sea water now occupies a prominent place in the front of the restaurant keeping the lobsters alive and active for as long as 2½ weeks and providing a constant source of conversation among waiting guests. The tank will hold up to 100 lobsters. It was built to our specifications by Arthur Schneithorst, a St. Louis restaurant man.

“An opportunity developed for talks on lobsters before service clubs, school classes and civic groups in connection with the festival week, and I now make a large number of such appearances.

“The lobster festival has not only created widespread interest in South Bend, but also in Maine, with personal letters from the governor of the state attesting to the great amount of attention given the event there.

“As an added feature, Maine Kennebec potatoes have now been added to the festival menu.

“One or more new ideas are added each year to provide something additional to talk about.





1.



2.



3.

It's  
"BIB TIME" at *Clark's* AGAIN ..

THE 4TH ANNUAL MAINE LOBSTER FESTIVAL  
One Week Beginning Wednesday, Oct. 17th

A  
LIVE  
One Pound  
MAINE  
LOBSTER  
WITH MELTED LEMON BUTTER

Including  
FRENCH FRIES  
CHOICE OF SALAD  
ROLLS - BUTTER  
COFFEE

\$1.50

yes, it's  
the same  
old price

The *Clark's* Restaurant  
104 N. Michigan St.

See the Oyster Bar in it's Spot of glory!

It's "BIB TIME" at CLARK'S  
bringing you our  
4th ANNUAL MAINE LOBSTER FESTIVAL  
Wednesday, October 17th thru Tuesday, October 23rd  
A ONE POUND  
LIVE MAINE LOBSTER  
cooked to order (20 min.)

Served with the  
Magnificent New Maine  
Kennebec Potato  
French Fried or Baked  
Tossed Green Salad  
Rolls - Coffee

Melted Lemon Butter

Additional Lobster  
Ala carte 1.25

BOILED TO A  
NEW ENGLAND \*T\*

1.50

DON A BIB  
A NOVICE? DON'T STAY - BECOME A GOURMET!

APPETITE WHETTERS  
While you wait for the "King's" Arrival

IN A CLASS ALONE -  
PACIFIC MINCED SEA CLAM STEW - .75  
with Saratoga Flakes

This is the dish that broke up Finnegan's Clam Chowder and  
Marching Society! Couldn't stand the competition. You'll  
understand when you see, smell and taste this huge plate of  
steaming rich Jersey milk loaded with the world's finest  
luscious, juicy meaty Pacific Sea Clams, flavored with  
golden creamery butter and - aw shucks -- I gotta stop -  
I'm droolin' - Try it. You'll agree!

BLUE POINTS on half shell - .55  
fresh as a sea breeze

CHERRYSTONE CLAMS - .55  
with an Eastern accent

LOUISIANA SHRIMP COCKTAIL - .65  
down south eatin'

FRESH SHRIMP REMOULADE - .75  
a bit of Ole New Orleans

SELECT OYSTER COCKTAIL - .65  
in a sauce that z-z-zings

Daily Shipments  
Direct from  
MAINE  
ARRIVE  
FRESH  
AND  
VIGOROUS  
and  
RETAIN  
THEIR  
DELICATE FLAVOR  
in their  
GLASS TANK HOME  
in  
OUR DINING ROOM

4

5

No. 4. A four column, eleven inch ad inserted in the South Bend newspapers before and during the Festival. Radio time was also used.

No. 5. Sample menu used during Festival showing the tie-in with other seafoods.



6.



7.



8.

No. 6. Proprietor Dan Clark, center, selects a lively Maine lobster for a customer from the display tank. Maine Coastal Warden Lester Stubbs, left, assisted with the promotion of the Festival. He spoke on Maine lobsters over the radio and at various civic clubs.

No. 7. Dan Clark, Maine Sea and Shore Fisheries Director, Marine Research Robert L. Dow and Warden Stubbs discuss plans for the Lobster Festival.

No. 8. The lobster display tank built from plans in this booklet shown at a Maine food show.

No. 1. Exterior of Clark's Restaurant at South Bend, Indiana, showing eye-catching banner.

No. 2. Customers waiting to be seated during the Fifth Annual Lobster Festival. The lobster display tank is shown in the foreground.

No. 3. Customers jam Clark's Restaurant from noon till closing time during the Festival. The lobster decorated seafood bar shown in the foreground highlights the decorations for the event.



"The exact time of the festival varies each year. It is actually determined by the Notre Dame football schedule. Because the purpose of the event is to create a repeat demand for lobster throughout the year among local people by introducing it to them at a special price, care is taken to hold the festival during a week when there will be no great influx of outsiders into South Bend. As a result, a week is selected when the Notre Dame team will be playing out of town.

"The price during the festival is \$1.50, with a refill available for \$1.25. The regular price the remainder of the year is \$1.95.

"The lobster obtained for display purposes is usually about a 20-pound size. Posters for the walls and photos for the window are obtained from the state of Maine. Booklets on lobsters which are distributed to guests also are obtained from the state of Maine, as well as souvenir lobster pins. Costume jewelry in the form of lobster pins is obtained from a company in New York City for sale at the cashier's counter. Widespread interest is created among students, with consequent family talk at home, by giving each high school biology class a live lobster to pickle. This is done in connection with talks before the classes.

"Some take-home business is done in lobster orders, but it is not encouraged because of a heat loss factor. Prices charged are the same as those charged for service in the restaurant.

"Our lobster dinner is exactly the same meal as five years ago, offered at the same price, although costs have increased. It may be necessary to raise prices this year, but that will only be done after considerable preparatory emphasis on how we have managed to retain the same price for so many years in the face of higher costs.

"The 1951 festival volume of 2,640 orders of lobster in one week included 485 dinners alone on a Friday evening. Lobster sales have been heavier each year, and amount to a good volume each week now, especially on Friday. The feature has become so generally accepted now in South Bend that in 1952 for the first time we have been offering it throughout the summer.

"The lobster promotion idea was developed by taking a page from the huge chain stores and how they promote trade with price leaders.

"The psychology of preparing all of our staff for the event is very important. Everybody must be a part of the picture and must be built up for it. Once everybody has been included in the plan and in preparations, no great problems are involved as a result of whole-hearted co-operation obtained from all.

"A full menu is provided customers during festival week as some persons in each group may not want to order lobster.

"To build checks and emphasize the restaurant's food appeal



throughout the year, special emphasis is placed on pushing desserts during festival week. Four of the restaurant's best desserts are selected, and a contest is then conducted among the waitresses. Those selling the greatest number of desserts win a cash prize. Totals are posted each day. The desserts featured each year vary, but always include cheesecake, which is one of our most popular dessert items. Many whole cheesecakes are sold to take out. These, incidentally, are counted in the contest.

"One of the purposes of the entire program has been to promote seafood to get away from high food costs involved in meat entrees. The plan has definitely helped do this.

"Our restaurant on North Michigan Street is one of four Clark food service operations. Others are Clark's Coffee Shop on East Washington Street, and Clark's Chicken-in-the-Rough on West Jefferson Street in South Bend, and Clark's at the Four Flags in the Four Flags Hotel in nearby Niles, Michigan. The lobster festival is identified only with the North Michigan operation as a specialty all its own."

---

## ADVERTISING

The Clark plan obviously would be too ambitious for a smaller operator but it contains all the basic ingredients for the successful promotion of seafood. According to reliable sources a restaurant that spends two to three percent of its total income for advertising and promotion is following good standard practice. Using this as a yardstick the Clark plan could be modified to fit the individual need.

## LOBSTER DISPLAY TANK

The value of the lobster display tank cannot be stressed too greatly, especially in those areas some distance from the eastern seaboard. In the tank the customer sees the lobster alive and kicking as fresh as the day it was caught. With the display tank the question of freshness never enters the customer's mind.

Placed in the front of the restaurant, or if possible in the window, the live shellfish will attract great attention and encourage the viewer to a buying frame of mind. The synthetic salt water lobster display tank is a working proposition and is now being used in many sections of the country. One notable example is the famous Captains' Table Restaurant in Los Angeles, where Maine lobsters are displayed and sold after being shipped by air from the east. The live Maine shellfish are a tremendous attraction to the people of the movie colony which in itself is a business builder for the management. Further details may be obtained by writing Bernie Tohl, owner of the Captains' Table.



For some time the Maine Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries has realized the value of the lobster tank in restaurant and seafood market promotion. After considerable research and experimentation by Department technicians, a portable tank was constructed which would hold about two dozen lobsters and used synthetic salt water—fresh water with the necessary chemicals added. Before the tank was released for display, it underwent thorough tests. These tests proved that lobsters, which were in good condition before being placed in the tank, would keep for at least ten days before showing any signs of weakness. The tank was constructed for a twofold purpose. One, to construct a tank that could be produced for less than \$400—one that would be within the financial reach of a great many restaurant operators and retail seafood dealers. Two, to make a tank in which artificial salt water could be used—this meant that the tank could be operated anywhere in the country.

In the past year this tank has been used very successfully in super markets, at food shows, and in restaurants. And no matter where it is used it always attracts a crowd. The complete details of the tank and the chemical mixtures for the artificial salt water are shown on pages 12-14.

### **CONSTRUCTION OF LOBSTER TANK**

The diagram on page 13 shows the working layout of the first re-circulating artificial sea water lobster display tank constructed by the Maine Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries. Recently the tank has been modified in that the refrigeration plates are now placed in the ends of the display tank. This change cuts down the size of the unit by eliminating the cooling tank.

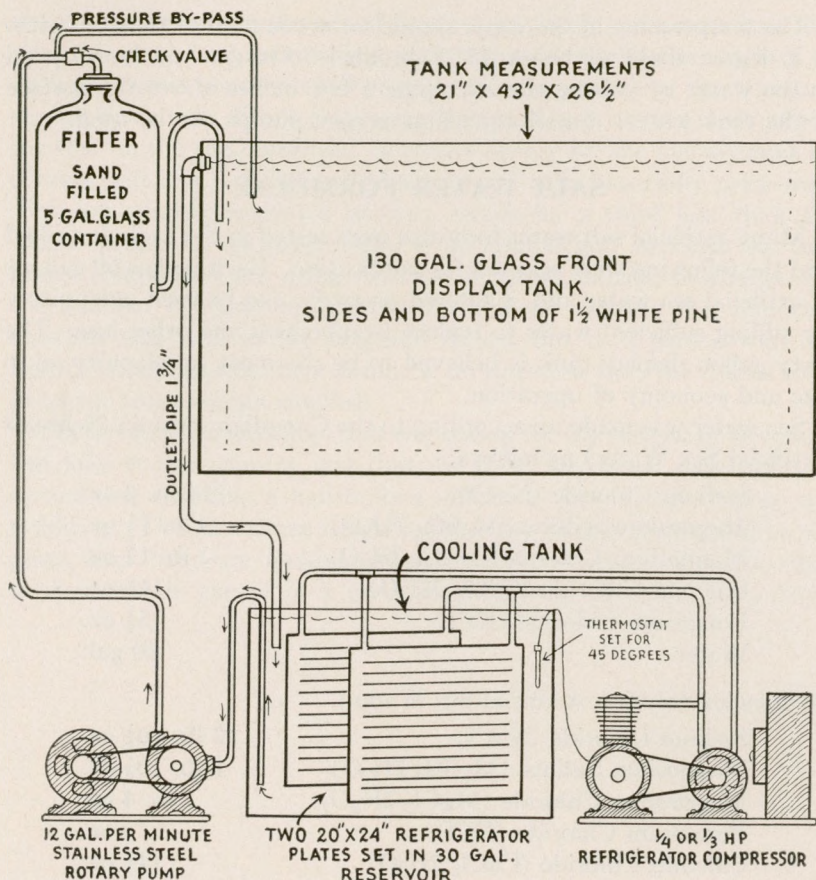
### **SIZE OF TANK**

The size of the display tank is regulated by the capacity of the refrigeration compressor and the number of lobsters to be displayed. The usual ratio is one lobster to each gallon of water, for the best survival in storage. For display purposes the lobsters should have sufficient room to move about; therefore, the ratio of lobsters to water should be decreased.

### **UNIT FILTER**

The filter is one of the most important parts of the unit. With a number of lobsters moving about in the tank the water will become cloudy enough to impair visibility after a period of a few hours, if the filter is not working properly. In the original model a sand-filled glass container was used with success. This filter was changed as the water





became cloudy. The recent model uses a demountable filter with a cotton core similar to an automobile oil filter but with a greater capacity. This does not work any better than the sand filter but is more easily changed.

While in the display tank the lobsters should not be fed. Feeding clouds the water and cuts down the effectiveness of the display.

### UNIT FITTINGS

In constructing the unit it should be remembered that fittings which come in contact with the circulating water should not be made of copper, brass, bronze or alloys containing these metals. Copper, especially, is toxic to lobsters and water containing minute quantities will kill them within a few hours. Stainless steel, galvanized iron, steel, or plastic fittings have been used successfully.

The temperature of the water should be as constant as possible within a degree above or below 45° Fahrenheit. Oxygen can be supplied to the water by raising the inlet pipe a few inches above the surface of the tank water. Small aquarium oxygen pumps can be used.

### SALT WATER FORMULAE

Many artificial salt water formulae were tested in the tank described and the following were selected for publication. Each makes 60 gallons of artificial sea water and, if filtered properly, can be used indefinitely by adding sufficient water to replace evaporation and other loss. The sixty gallon display tank is believed to be the most satisfactory as to size and economy of operation.

Sea water was made up according to the Canadian formula (Schmalz Artificial Sea Water) as follows:

Sodium Chloride (NaCl)	14 lb. 2 oz.
Magnesium Sulfate ( $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ )	3 lb. 7½ oz.
Magnesium Chloride ( $\text{MgCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ )	2 lb. 12 oz.
Calcium Chloride ( $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ )	11½ oz.
Potassium Chloride (KCl)	5½ oz.
Water	60 gal.

(Brujewicz Solution Artificial Sea Water)

Sodium Chloride (NaCl)	12 lb. 10½ oz.
Magnesium Sulfate ( $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ )	1 lb. 10½ oz.
Magnesium Chloride ( $\text{MgCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ )	1 lb. 4 oz.
Potassium Chloride (KCl)	2¾ oz.
Calcium Chloride ( $\text{CaCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ )	14½ oz.
Sodium Bicarbonate ( $\text{NaHCO}_3$ )	¼ oz.
Sodium Bromide (NaBr)	Trace
Water	60 gal.

In the Brujewicz solution fifty pounds of lobsters were stored for two weeks and were in excellent condition when taken from the tank. No effort was made to keep the shellfish to the lethal point.

### WHOLESALE PROMOTION

Many wholesale dealers are finding that the day when the Maine lobster had little or no competition is a thing of the past. In 1952 more than 20 million pounds of so-called lobster was imported into the United States from Africa, South America and Australia. It is the opinion of some that this large importation of "Crawfish tails" is not hurting the Maine lobster industry. But when it is considered



that these 20 million pounds of imports are being consumed here and that this poundage means clear meat, whereas the Maine catch of 20 million pounds includes shell weight, the importance of the situation cannot be denied. While this heavy importation is not seriously affecting the "in the shell business," a recent survey by the Department indicates that it is a threat to "lobster meat" sales especially price-wise. This low quality imported product retails for a third less than the Maine product. Although there is no comparison between the two, many restaurants are using crawfish in stews, salads, newburgs and thermidors. In many cases the menus did not indicate that imported crawfish was used in the prepared dishes, but to a person who has tasted Maine lobster there could be no question that the dishes were prepared from foreign shellfish.

The survey also indicates that one reason for the success of the crawfish tails in this country was that the most important importer concerned was spending a half-million dollars a year on advertising and publicity. This fact alone has brought many Maine wholesalers to the point that they are looking for ways and means to promote their product which, except in a very few instances, has never been done.

